

# ENGAGEMENT

**ENGAGEMENT** in our own health and well-being and with the issues that affect us: our teaching, learning and community. How do we foster a culture that enables staff and students to have ownership of and agency in their lives?

## What is engagement?

Engagement means 'to participate, to take action'. Much like many of the other RESTORE themes, this will be different for all of us. An individual's agency is perhaps the most important ingredient in successful engagement. Without agency, engagement may be meaningless. It's like the difference between consultation and collaboration. We know that when we **"do change to people they experience it as violence, but when people do change for themselves they experience it as liberation"**.

## Why is engagement important now?

School leaders will of course need to return to some kind of normality and inevitably there will be a drive to return to routines of the past. This is unsurprising, as those rules and routines are the very things that keep schools safe providing both physical and emotional containment. But before we jump back into those routines it is going to be essential to engage with the school community and allow people to share their stories. Without a period of recognition and understanding the 'now' – enabling student agency will be almost impossible.

## **How can we encourage and enable engagement at this time?**

### With the Senior Leadership team:

- How will you be explicit as a school leader and demonstrate that you value people's engagement?
- Are you willing to take risks and allow others to lead?
- How will you ensure that all stakeholders are included?
- How do you promote equity of engagement where inequality is prevalent?

- What is the best listening frame for this engagement? Open forums, coaching conversations, circles, school council type meetings?

### With the staff team:

- How can students regularly articulate their needs?
- How can this be made an intrinsic part of the feedback loop for curriculum development?
- How do you endorse the process, validate the work of others and demonstrate that you want to plan for recovery?

### Within the curriculum:

- How will you address the need for additional pastoral and social emotional development?
- How will you demonstrate that you understand the grief that others have experienced?
- How will this be reflected in the curriculum?

### With parents and carers:

- How can we offer empathy and spend time listening?
- When we do this, how can we ensure that we are being sensitive to individual family circumstances, cultural backgrounds and additional needs?